Wordeater
VII

WORDEATER 7

	PAGE
COVER AWARD - Jeff Lane	
FASCINATION - Jacque Bebar	1
SO SOFTLY THE RAIN FALLS - Anony	1
WE SMILED - Chip Guse	1
SOUTHERNLY WINDS - Chip Guse	1
zaNity - Cookie Haas	2
DREAM - Paul Hawkins	2
CARE - Peg Bingham	3
FLOUR CHILD - Jacque Bebar	3
RAGGEDY - Chip Guse	3
SUMMER SONG - Barbara Strait	4
(funny) - sharon mccartan	4
FOR ALL OF YOU WHO NEVER HAVE - Joseph Luther Crowley	5
I can remember - Bruce McAllister	5
Dreams of a child - THS	5
From me to you - Imur Schermaine	6
DUNES - Louise Converse	6
Saint Mammon in the White Bank - Bruce McAllister	6
A GROWN-UP'S GARDEN OF GRIEVANCE - Louise Converse	6
THE BALLAD OF THE GRAND OLD EAGLE - B. J. Ellis	7
WATERGATE - A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT - A DAY FREEDOM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT WAS TESTED - Joe Cabrera	7 - 9
LUST - Anony	9 - 10
RAPED - Keith Roberts	10 - 11
BALIN' - Doug Richard	11 - 13
STILL LIFE - Doug Emory	13 - 14
LIVING BLUES - Diane Bruske	14 - 16
LEAD ROOF - Etha Griffin	16 - 17
THE PIRANHA PECCADILLO - Louise Converse	17 - 19
THE TWILIGHT WORLD - Louise Converse	19 - 22
WATERSHED OF THE RIVER STYX - Doug Emory	22 - 24
...and so they were streakers - Arlene Delrose	24
Staff	24

FASCINATION

Crystal universe
Fluid world of wonder -- Pop!
Soap bubble magic.

Jacque Bebar

So softly the rain falls --
a pitter - patter...
How often we've heard
those words --
Yet they still cleanse
I wish there were words
that could cleanse away
a lost love.
If there were
they would be as the rain --
leaving only a breath
of unspeakably fresh air behind.

Anony.

We smiled
and the camera
captured our emotions
on a celluloid band,
but you were never captured
by any Kodak or Titian.
your mem'ry is with me.
Though I left you I wept
and my Kodak illusions remain
in the back page of your yearbook,
on the top shelf of my bookcase.

Chip

Southernly winds
affect my senses
and I long to call all the world
and see who wants to come
and fly a kite with me.
But the world is
caught up in its games of adulthood,
so I pull out my frustrations
against the wind
and set my hopes asail,
living out my dreams
vicariously
on a springtime pleasure
materialized in paper, wood, and cloth
standing still in the breeze --
as I stand still admist the commotion

Chip

zaNity

Staring through bars of a people zoo
oh, looky there, there's "you know
who!"
Goldy Locks has just passed by -- hot
on the heels of a curly-headed
guy.

Tiny Tim tip-toes through the cigarette
butts as Quick-Fingered T.V.
curses Lady Luck. --
He just got bucked, losing out to a
left; but there's a few tricks
up his sleeve to use yet.

"Has-beens" mix with "what-is-now"
to form a conglomerate of "what
was tomorrow.
Go over by the escape exit if you
dare for a group of jock apes
huddle there.

A few unusuals float by, along
with some bystanders, caught in
their high.
A change in the pace of those in
the maze makes you start
and look up from your
solitary gaze.

A release of the cages and the
island gets crowded; like
clusters with like and the
groups become shrouded.
Peanuts, pop, and smokes are passed
and passed...and passed...
with hopes that they'll last.

A Keeper filters through the
throng, humming bits of an
old time song,
Cleaning up after the latest fad,
as streakers dash by totally
unclad.

Cookie

DREAM

Today is a sad day.
I am saying goodbye to someone
that I never did say good bye to in real time.
As I sit staring from an over stuffed velvet
chair, I wonder if he would think this is worth it.

As I stand, I salute the force which has taken him,
my friend dressed in white.
I follow him as I did before, down corridors
trying to hold a sense of dignity
that is expected.

The most disasterous hour that day was
leaving my car in procession to the hole
the earth made his.
I walked on frozen earth,
grass crushing beneath my patent leather shoes.

As I stand in a corner of the tattered tent
I realize how terrible this death is
and how I would have better spent this time
sitting in a chair we built one summer
as a project and recalled memories
which I am here today to bury.

As I leave walking with frost on my toes
and with ringing canticles in my ears,
I cry.
Not in mourning but for myself as
I realize I lost a part of myself and
celebrated it all wrong.

Paul Hawkins

CARE

If I care enough
I'll opt for you
If you care enough
You won't ask me to.

Peg Bingham

FLOUR CHILD

From Sonny and Cher,
To long hair,
To folding children's underwear,
Is this all? Must I atrophy?
Approaching thirty, sure catastrophe?
I have not changed!
I can't believe I'd
Never wear a pair of Levi's.

Oh bills...and pills...and money spent
God save me from establishment!
Deliver me from household dread
And give me questioning instead.

I can't be stagnant, never thinking,
Serving robot, never blinking,
Guide me past the P.T.A.
Expand my life in every way.
Grant me interest, hope and laughter,
Destroy my apathy, and after
Help me seek myself, and then
Stay always new with thoughts that bend.

Jacque Bebar

RAGGEDY

Raggedy Ann Doll,
so fine in your hand sewn clothes
tawny shagged hair
and petal pink face,
talk of the reflections
of your experiences
carrying your defenses
in your eyes..
You hold me at bay
and yet ask my sincerity.
I kiss you
regardless
with a word and a glance,
never meeting your lips,
wishing the first advance was yours
and not just a tradition
wearing away our identities

Chip Guse

SUMMER SONG

Summer sounds, embroidering the fabric of childhood,
Linger on country roads etched in crystalline autumn sunlight.

Twilight fog rises in hollows, and hangs suspended.
The bullfrogs' courting song has gone. Cicadae and crickets hush.

In our room, the lamp forms a warm pool of light where you read.
Our talk, our silence stay the autumn's hush, the winter's promise.

Barbara Strait

(funny)

funny
how i cradle my hurts
and rock them...

deep, down inside.

funny
how i swallow my fears (along with the years)
and digest them...

deep, down inside.

funny
how they never knew (who was to know)
that the turbulence
was dangerously swelling...

deep, down inside.

funny
how my sanity is waning (madness waxing).
i was born a child of the moon, they said.
cancerian crab, hungering for
the passions that exist only
within the confines of this mind.

funny
how they see it now...
only after i let the inside
spew forth like lava from a volcano.

(funny how humor is humorless,
laughter is laughless,
and love is loveless.)

funny
how i cradle my hurts
and rock them...

deep, down inside.

sharon mccartan

FOR ALL OF YOU WHO NEVER HAVE

For all of you
who never have,
And none of you
who always will;
Remember how you
never did,
And how you always
never will.

Joseph Luther Crowler

I can remember
a girl whom I chased with my passions,
in a faraway time,
at a long ago place,
soft floors and cushions,
soft lassie unlaced from her fetters of cloth,
on rainy days staying inside getting wetter,
April rolled on getting warmer and better,
in glory embraced,
my eyes on her face,
I thought I could get her to love me,
I thought she thought lovingly of me,
the gods' gift of grace is a woman,
my woman has gone,
one breath of forever,
she's left me a song that I can remember.

Bruce McAllister

Dreams of a child:

One night, I saw in my mind a crockodile.
And that night when I went to bed,
I dreamed that the snakes were crawling over my stomach.
And the crockodiles were at the dresser,
putting powder and lipstick on their faces.
One of them was in the bed at its foot.
Then one of the crockodiles came over to me and looked down
in my face.
I winced!
I woke and saw a picture of a snake on the wall.
And I ran as fast as I could from the room.
I was really scared.

One night, I saw in my mind, a web and mice.
Suddenly I was swimming round my bed,
in a bathtub!
The sweat poured from me as flames lept about.
I woke to find that all was right.
But after drifting off again,
the mice and web returned.
This time Indians were attacking,
and I hid in the basement.
The mice are nibbling at my web of a mind.
(Pictures of the brain look like webs of white!)

THS

From me to you.

You are there,
i am here.
But where is {there / here}?
Well, there is not here
Otherwise it would not be there.
Likewise here is not there
Or we would be together.
However we are together
When i believe you are here,
Then the two become one
Thus you can put the t in here
So that we can always be together.

Put into words by
Imur Schermaine

DUNES
(an impression from the novel

Sand babies
Drifting on-
Barchans,
Never finding toehold
And burying the stolid walls
That centuries built.
The end is only the beginning,
In reverse.

Louise Converse

Saint Mammon in the White Bank

Efforts loosely lost upon a falsely purple stage
Electors cast for promises of better days,
And choose the favorite sun of the most enormous sum,
Who then rules by fortunes, favors, and the left side of his thumb,
Keeping promises as ever the weight of fortune pays.
Power is the means of rule and also is the end.
War is only power's tool and will be used again.
So you can put your mind at ease if Vietnam says sour,
For though there is no prince of peace there is a prince of power.

Economics rampant on a field of tarnished gold,
Evidence of confidence escaping from the soul
Of electors turned to questioning the hunger of the road
As tomorrow is diminished by the weight of what is thrown
On the bier of the present, and the taxes pay the tolls.
Money is the scrap of trade but also is the master,
Shuttled off from hand to hand and always moving faster.
But rest your head and worry not of politic's devices;
Inflation roars? The gates are shut. We haveour prince of prices.

Bruce McAllister

A GROWN-UP'S GARDEN OF GREVANCE

That beastly cow, all black with mire,
I lothe with all my mind;
She's forever knocking down the wire
To eat my tomato vines.
*
*
The world is bereft of a number of things
And they're blaming it all on Arabian kings.
*
*
I have a little plumber
Who goes here and there for me,
And until he blew his cover
He was quiet as could be.
He is very, very clever
And his bugging jobs were grand,
But you should hear him shoot his mouth off
When he hits that witness stand!

One morning very early
Before the jig was up,
I tried to buy his silence
In a sort of cover-up.
But that lousy little plumber,
Like a rat upon a ship,
Had spilled the beans already
To avoid a ten-year rap.

Louise Converse

THE BALLAD OF THE GRAND OLD EAGLE

The eagle is king of his domain
which reaches far and wide,
It covers mountain, hill and plain
and it deserves his pride.

He stands aloft in mountain chateau
and looks across the land
feeling safe above his foe
his feet do firmly stand.

After a bit he stretches wings
to show their mighty spread
having no doubt who's king of kings
he turns his noble head.

O eagle thou art truly grand
from nothing you turned great;
you came and conquered this fair land,
happy was your fate.

Today the eagle leaves his perch
to take a look around
and what he finds in his search
the greatest riches 'ere found

With his wealth he begins to build
his trade and industry.
He takes the poor and unskilled
and gives them ability.

Through his wealth the domain grows
and stretches across the seas.
Buying and bartering overflows,
a promising future, he believes.

O eagle thou art truly grand
from nothing you turned great
everywhere we see your brand
happy is your fate.

The mighty eagle, a fighting bird,
enters into wars.
Guns and bombs can be heard
as through the sky he soars.

Though his domain remains untouched
he has a benevolent eye.
Help is brought in talons clutched,
his duty he'll always try.

Allies and foes took his aid
but felt no gratitude.
And never were their debts repaid,
they claimed he did intrude.

O eagle thou art truly grand
from nothing you became great
the needy scorned your helping hand
unhappy was your fate.

The eagle faces internal strife
crime and vice abound.
Everyone fears for his life,
answers can not be found.

A tear rolls from the eagle's
as he looks 'ore his domain,
smog and pollution block the sky,
clean water is hard to obtain.

Respect for our eagle, alas, is gone
no one seems to care.
Riots on the château lawn
leave nothing but despair.

O eagle thou art truly grand
from nothing you turned great,
your feet now unsteady stand
do not tempt your fate.

B. J. Ellis

WATERGATE - A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT - A DAY FREEDOM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT WAS TESTED

The Watergate incident wasn't just a third rate bungled burglary. It was another example of trust and confidence in government of the people being eroded, an infringement upon our right of self-determination. Those involved, in effect, attempted to tell us we couldn't govern ourselves. Illegal and unethical surveillance was used; it was the mismanagement of power and authority entrusted to our elected and appointed officials.

So far those indicted, under investigation, or already tried, have been appointees. The fact that many of those involved in this and other questionable activities smacks of the misuse of the trust we gave to President Nixon. Whether he himself is guilty, his appointment of those involved who believed that the American people would allow the Watergate Incident to occur and not take any action, makes him responsible for their actions. He has admitted his responsibility, but has done virtually nothing to alleviate the

situation. Suppose the president of an industrial firm brought into his company people who arranged for others to attempt industrial spying, and who subsequently were caught. And suppose further this president admitted that although he wasn't personally involved, he was responsible for the actions of his people. Could the board of directors, having to account to the shareholders, allow this president to remain? I would hope not.

Recently a poll was taken that indicated politicians rank the lowest in esteem of all professional people, just below used car salesmen - an indication of people's attitudes about government in general. But, if it weren't for some honest people in government, the facts about Watergate would never have been known; they would have been surpressed, repressed, and the truth would never have been reported. Should we blame the Republican party? It can't be said for certain that in the same situation, the Democrats wouldn't have done the same. Nor can I honestly say that I would be above temptation. But if the opportunity were not present, if everyone knew that the American public would not condone such action, chances are this caper would never have been attempted.

That those involved attempted such an escapade isn't as important as that they believed they could accomplish their mission. They must have believed that the vast majority of the public really didn't care. What frightens me is that, to an extent, they were right. The first week of the televised Watergate Hearings when all three major networks carried them simultaneously, there was such an outcry by many who were missing their favorite quiz shows and soap operas that an arrangement had to be made whereby the networks rotated their coverage. Perhaps the televised hearings were overdone, but it seems that the majority of the public didn't want to be bothered. And that scare sme.

A few years ago a former president made a statement that should still apply today. "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." So I'm asking those involved. I'm asking Mr. Halderman, Mr. Erlichman, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Liddy, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Barker, instead of asking what your country can do for you, what did you do in this instance for your country?

Perhaps too many of us have forgotten that people elected and appointed are public officials. Instead it seems we serve them. How is it that this outlook on government came to be so turned around? There was a time when the holder of a government position was still a public servant in the minds of the vast majority; he was answerable to the people. When was the last time you were involved in a matter of national or international scope? Those that formed this government were politicians but only on a second level. They had their professions, trades, or businesses which were their primary concern. There were no "professional" politicians. Now we have those who make a career of politics. It is estimated that the Republican who will challenge Adlai Stevenson for senator will have to spend approximately $2,000,000 for his campaign. Two million dollars to get a job that pays $50,000 a year approximately. Does this sound like a public servant? Government has become so large, so unwieldly and so bureaucratic that we are not in control. We should take action to remedy the situation and give government back to the people.

I recently read an article about the "bugging" by Abraham Lincoln as compared to the alleged bugging by Nixon and his cohorts. The author was a professor of American History. Lincoln hired the Pinkerton Agency to spy on those who would undermine the republic. He informed the public of these actions. Not once did he use this power against even his most critical political enemy. His wife was suspected of being a traitor, for she was receiving mail from relatives in the Confederacy. Unannounced, President Lincoln voluntarily went to Congress (while in session) to let it be known they had nothing to fear. This man raised the prestige and integrity of the Presidency to the highest level it had ever been at any time before and probably any time since. President Nixon has been asked repeatedly to cooperate with Congress, and has stated he would cooperate fully with the investigation. But as of this writing he has yet to cooperate with court orders, with the Senate Watergate Committee, or with his own specially appointed investigator. Can Nixon say he has upheld the

tradition Lincoln instilled? Those who defend Mr. Nixon will say, "But he has to keep secrets for national security reasons." Did not Lincoln have as many worries about national security as Nixon has now? I think so. Perhaps Mr. Lincoln had more problems, for a war was being fought that pitted American against American. Who at that time could be certain that someone wasn't a spy for the confederacy?

We must have faith in self government. But in order to maintain our rights we must constantly exercise them and put them to a test, lest these rights become obsolete through non-usage. Watergate is a test, a test of whether our government by and for the people can endure an incident of this nature. I feel it will endure in spite of and because of Watergate. It is a test to keep us alert to the fact that complacency and apathy may be our own worst enemies.

Perhaps this writing has angered you. If so, I've accomplished part of my purpose. Some will vehemetly disagree with me. That too is fine, for if there were no dissent, this would be the country the Erlichman's and Mitchell's want it to be. I'm hoping that you've thought about the situation and realize that it is serious. This democratic republic has been bent but not broken -- yet. Power to the people.

Joe Cabrera

LUST

The weekend had come at last. After a particularly hellish week, Maggie was more than ready for it. She was sick and tired of bacterial slides, boring psychology lectures, McDonald's hamburgers, and her job. All she wanted was to get away, to listen to some music, to dream...

It was Saturday night, and the house was very dark and still. The only sound was the periodic lull of the furnace. The gentle hum was comforting to Maggie, and she wondered if it was to him too, as they lay there on the bed. They did not touch. In fact, the two resembled strangers who neither knew nor cared about each other. She wondered what he was thinking and feeling. Her own thoughts were playing havoc with her mind. She couldn't think for both of them; it had come to the point where she couldn't think at all. If only she could blot everything out, not think, not care.

Maggie sighed as the sound of the furnace brought her back to reality. With mustered courage, and a small voice she did not recognize, she feebly asked, "What are we going to do, Michael?"

She did not look at him as she said it; she preferred not to see his face. He was more mysterious this way. It was as if he weren't there, as if his voice were a separate entity. He had no body, just a soft, girlish voice rising above the silence of the room.

"I don't know, Maggie," he whispered. That was just the response she expected. She knew he had no answers alone, just as she did not. They had to work together if they were to settle this; they both knew it.

"What are we gonna do?" It was his turn to ask. "How do you feel about it?"

Maggie wrestled with her mind for the right words, but she ended up stating flatly, "I don't want to get pregnant. I don't want to do that to you, to ruin your life. You've got alot to look forward to..."

"You mean you don't want to ruin your life!" he broke in. "You're the one who's got everything to look forward to, nursing school and all. Me? I'll never do anything better than work at a nine-to-five job the rest of my life. I'll never make anything of myself. I'm dumb, just a jack-off..."

God, how she hated it when he talked about himself that way! She shut her eyes tight as the familiar tears came. She loved him so much; he had become a part of her. He was her life now, but nothing could convince him of that. Damn him, why couldn't he see it!

"Are you crying?" he asked irritably.

"No," her shaking voice replied.

"Ha," he grunted.

They lapsed into an unbearable silence. The tears were flowing harder for Maggie now, and she tried to suppress a sob. She felt Michael staring at her, but she turned her head away from him, toward the window.

"It's not worth it, Maggie," he finally said. It's just not worth it. I love you, but I don't want to marry you, not yet anyway. If you were to get pregnant, I'd have to marry you. I know I'd end up hating you. I'd wished I'd never met you."

"I'd hate you too," Maggie cried defensively.

"You're a baby, Maggie," Michael said slowly.

The remark really floored her. She lay there in absolute silence, scarcely breathing. What he said was true; she knew it. She didn't want to bring a baby into the world when she herself was a child. She had to grow up, but that was not the way to do it.

In the darkness she felt Michael's hand grope for hers; it was clammy. She squeezed it hard, and he responded.

"Let's forget it, Maggie," he said decisively. "It's not worth it. It's not worth losing you over this. You mean too much to me..."

She turned her head and found him looking deeply at her. She returned his gaze, her eyes searching his.

"Smile for me, Maggie," Michael said softly. "You know I can't stand it if you stop smiling."

Maggie smiled shyly, as he put his arms around her. She felt secure within his embrace, but silently wondered how many other Saturday nights they'd spend like this one. She pushed the thought from her mind, because feeling his arms around her was all she needed to face another Monday.

Anony.

RAPED

It was a cold rainy night as I drove to pick up my girlfriend, Liz. We had been invited up to a friend's house in Greenwood to play cards and to share a pizza. The freezing rain tapping like fine particles of sand on the windshield made me feel drowsy, as I drove along. Yawning lazily to myself I thought about the gloomy feeling that the weather injected into my bloodstream. Driving into Liz's long driveway I dreaded running to the door to get her.

"Hi Liz."

"Hi," she said, exhaling down my collar, and sending a tingle down my spine. We got into the car and started on our thirty minute trip to Greenwood, the tape player blaring one of Alice Cooper's hit songs. The quick, vibrating chords of the music added another touch of gloom to the night.

Arriving in Greenwood I drove straight to our friend's apartment, parking the car in the area reserved for visitors coming to the apartment complex. We both walked around the puddles of water forming on the asphalt parking lot. I knocked on the door. Recieving no answer I quickly repeated my knock, "Maybe they're not off of work yet," said Liz.

"Maybe," I said. A little upset over the absence of our friends, I walked out onto the sidewalk looking for our friend's car, but I failed to see it anywhere.

Looking toward the adjoining apartments I saw two people struggling on the sidewalk, I stared at them for a minute wondering what was going on. "Liz," I said "Come here." She walked out onto the sidewalk and stopped beside me. "Look at those two. Over there!" I pointed in the couple's direction. "I wonder what's going on."

"Probably just a couple of kids playing," answered Liz.

"I don't think so."

"Come on let's go."

We both started back toward the car when I heard a muffled cry. "Help me, rape." I knew it came from the couple in front of the far apartment. Only then, I saw, the girl was being dragged toward the garage, by a large man in a white coat. I wondered what to do.

"Come on let's leave," said Liz.

"But she might need some help, Liz."

"I'm scared let's go,"

We both ran to the car. Getting in I decided to drive past the garage and see what was happening.

I noticed that the back door of one of the cars was opened and that two people were in the back seat. As we drove by, the man seemed to clamp a hand over the woman's mouth. "I wonder what we should do, Liz."

"Nothing, let's leave it to the police."

"I can't. What if she really is being raped, and I could possibly stop it or save her life. Wouldn't it make you ashamed if I didn't at least try to help?"

"No, it wouldn't make me ashamed. Let's just leave and go home."

I drove around the block several times, not knowing what to do. Confusion running like a thief through my mind, I finally decided to call the police. I dialed the operator from a payphone and asked to be connected with the police station.

"Hello, Greenwood police station, Sergeant Trying speaking," was the immediate result.

"I would like to report a rape I think I saw at the Greenwood Apartment complex," I said in nervous tones.

"You want to report a rape at the Greenwood Apartments. Where are you now?"

"I don't exactly know. You see I don't live here, and I don't know my way around. After a few more questions which I couldn't answer, the Police Sergeant finally said he would look into the matter.

I was confused even more so I drove back to the apartments looking for the couple. I finally decided to go home.

As I drove home the windshield wipers beat a steady rhythm.-- whompf-whompf, whompf-whompf, but all I could hear was "Help me. Help me."

Keith Roberts

BALIN'

The summer between my freshman and sophomore years in high school, I baled hay with five or six of my friends. Harold Hollingsworth's dad, Dale, did custom baling with his second-hand, New Holland baler, and we worked for him.

Earl Kendred and Dennis White usually rode the rack, and Harold, Terry Coe, and I worked in the barn. Most of the time, the farmer we were baling for would help, and he often had a hired hand or a son that worked with us too.

It was in July that we baled for Harley Hicks. He was one of the few really rich farmers we worked for all summer. Instead of the usual two-story wood farmhouse, he had a stone, split-level, with a paved driveway, and a connected two-car garage.

It was hot that day, about 98°, and Harley's daughter, Jane, was sun bathing out in the yard. She was different than the run-of-the-mill farmer's daughters we had run into. Many would do chores on the farm and drive the wagons in from the field for us, but she was a college student and didn't do anything.

She was wearing a white bikini that barely covered what it was supposed to.

Before we got started, I overheard her father say to her, "Jane, why don't you go in and put some clothes on?"

"Oh, Jesus Christ, Dad. I've got clothes on. How can I get a tan if I don't wear my suit?"

That was the very first time I'd ever heard a farm girl talk to her father like that. I guess it was because he had spoiled her so badly. Her father didn't call her down for swearing, he just sighed, turned around, and walked off.

Dale, Earl, and Dennie had been in the field and loaded a wagon. We put on our gloves, I took a last drink of water from the garden hose, and we headed for the barn.

By the tenth bale, we were all sweating pretty good, and the dust was hanging in the air, making it difficult to breathe. I didn't have a watch, but it was about 20 minutes to a half-hour before we got all the hay up the hiker, into the loft, and

stacked where Harley wanted it. We had to take it clear to the back of the barn, and what made it worse, the bales were running 90 to 95 pounds. By the time I carried a bale to the back, I barely had the strength to lift it. And to throw it up four or five high was pure agony.

Unless something went wrong or there weren't enough men in the barn, the barn workers always finished 5 or 10 minutes before the next wagon came in. We would go out and sit on the hiker to get air. If there was time, we would come down and get some water.

At Hicks', the closest water was the garden hose at the house, so we went up there between loads. The main reason, though, was to gawk at Jane.

We worked on into the day, and about 5 minutes into a wagon-load, I got sick. It was a combination of the heat, fatigue, and about a gallon too much water. Harley was real nice about it. "Go up to the house and lay down under a tree for awhile," he said. "And have Jane get you some aspirin."

As I walked to the house, I felt kind of embarrassed about what Jane would think. I was very concerned about my manhood, and I wanted girls to think I was really tough.

None of us had gone closer than twenty feet to her. She was lying there on her back in a lawn chair. Her eyes were closed to the sun, so she didn't see me approach. Her legs were spread apart and when I got next to her, I noticed pubic hair sticking out of her bikini panties in places. I swallowed hard and cleared my throat. She jumped at the sound, and her eyes opened.

"Uh, your, uh, father said I should ask you to get me some aspirin."

"Why? Are you sick."

That seemed pretty obvious to me, but I didn't say so. I just answered, "yes."

She sat up and turned on the chair. She bent down and made a big production out of putting her sandals on.

I just stood there watching those big, beautiful, boobs trying to pop out.

She looked up and caught me staring. My face turned hot with embarrassment, and she smiled.

"Come on. I'll get them for you," she said.

"I walked with her as far as the door and stopped, "I'll wait out here."

"Oh, hell, come on in," she said. "I'm not going to bite you. Jesus Christ."

I said I would rather wait outside, but I was already following her in. I hung back a little to get a rear view as she moved through the kitchen. It was just as nice as the front.

I sat down on a kitchen chair, and she went off to get aspirin out of the bathroom. She returned in a minute with two aspirin in her hand. She handed them to me and her warm hand touched mine. It was as smooth and soft as any city girl's. She got a glass of water and sat down across from me. She asked me all kinds of questions about myself, and I answered with "yes" or "no," while trying not to stare at her cleavage.

I was always shy and hadn't been around girls much, so I was really uncomfortable. I took the aspirin and got up.

"Wait," she said.

I stopped, and she stood up and walked toward me. I backed up and ran into the counter. When she reached me, she pressed her whole body against mine and put her arms around me. I stood there with my arms hanging at my sides like a dummy, and she turned her head slightly and kissed me.

I wouldn't have admitted it to anyone at the time, but I had never kissed a girl before. Before I knew what was happening, she had slipped her tongue into my mouth, and was moving it all around.

When she took her mouth off mine, I was breathing hard and was having trouble seeing. We kissed again, and this time, it was more of a mutual thing. I brought my arms up and put them around her, and she pressed her soft body even harder against mine.

As we kissed, I ran my hands down her back to the top of her skimpy, white panties. I hooked my thumbs under the cloth and began to slowly pull them down her slim, brown hips.

I half expected her to slap my face or at least act surprised, but she acted like it was an everyday occurance. And now that I think about it, maybe it was.

I was suddenly aware that I stank like sweat, but if she noticed, it didn't seem to bother her. As I slid her panties down her legs, she pulled me down to the floor on top of her. She spread her legs apart, and as I reached for my zipper,tthe screen door opened.

I was up from the floor in a second flat. Jane turned away from the door and tried pulling her bikini up. She didn't get too far, and when her father stepped in, it was pretty obvious what was going on.

I expected him to rant and rave and maybe grab something and beat me to death, but all he said to me was, "Get out of here."

I went around him, and I heard him say to Jane, "Go to your room" That was all he said, just, "go to your room."

I wasn't sick any more, so I went back out to the barn and started working again. Harley followed in a few minutes. In an hour, we finished for the day. He hadn't said a word to me.

There was another day of baling to do at Hicks', but I thought it best if I didn't go back. The day after, when we were baling at another farm, Harold told me they hadn't seen Jane at all the day before. I said that was too bad and changed the subject.

The wagon came in, and we climbed up into the barn. It was much less hot, and when I picked up my first bale, it weighted only about 70 pounds. "It's definitely going to be a better day," I thought. And it was.

Doug Richard

STILL LIFE

Dan felt he was being frozen from the inside out. He sat up gently on the bed, careful not to disturb the girl sleeping alongside him. In the darkness he fumbled for his jeans, found them, and tugged them on. Dan crept cat-like from the room.

One lone dim light lit the kitchen. Dan strained to see from the window below the light, but saw only himself, gazing wearily back in upon himself. He pulled open the refrigerator, mechanically grabbing a beer. The can opened with a flat sound. Into and across a living room that was dark as a funeral shroud Dan tread softly to the large picture window.

Outside the scene was a still life. Nothing moved beneath a street lamp that pounded powerfully, frigidly down upon parked cars and pavement. There was no life in sight. Dan turned away, instantly hating the night's static peace.

So this is how it ends Dan thought, nearly surprising himself with the realization. Looking at the darkened apartment he thought of Karen sleeping so soundly and not even knowning. It all seemed insane. Remembering the earlier evening still hurt, her saying I love you and him searching for courage enough to tell her how lost their love really was. Pain had seared him like a hot iron whenever he tried to speak. He had not told her. Dan had just held her tightly until she was asleep.

Another long swig finished the beer. Crushing the can swiftly and cruelly in his hands Dan headed to the kitchen for a refill.

"Sometimes I get this crazy dream that I just take off in my car, but you can travel for ten thousand miles and still stay where you are." Dan half-sang, half-mumbled the song. He hoped the idea those lyrics expressed would prove false. In any case he was about to test them by heading across a thousand miles for San Diego and the Pacific ocean. Hopefully, there he could find a job as a hand on a freighter and end up somewhere very far away, Africa perhaps or Australia.

"And why must I get so far from here? I know it isn't you, Karen." He raised his drink in a mock toast, facing toward the bedroom door. "Unfortunately, it isn't you. That'd make it all too easy." He turned to the window and saw that nothing had changed. Total stability still ruled the outside. "I'm afraid the problem is with me. I just can't settle down and enjoy things... Maybe sometime I'll figure out what's wrong and come back to you..." He laughed then, a very resigned laugh. "You'd make a fine Preacher, Daniel." Another top was popped on another beer. "You see this beer can, amateur philosopher. It roughly parallels your life by beginning so full and vibrant and ending completely empty, a worthless piece of trash fit only to be discarded alongside lonely highways." Dan paced furiously across the room.

Memories rose in his mind like thunder in the distance, and fight them as he may Dan knew he could never stop the cold rains they would bring. Sitting down on the worn familiar couch Dan closed his eyes as the storm hit. He saw Karen from those long few months ago and he relived her first warm yet wary smiles and all their first times, from their first meeting on. Especially he saw her one day in the park with the forest all blazingly yellow against a blinding blue sky. The sun had turned her blonde hair the color of the leaves and that day more so than any other she had been a part of him. When his mind raced around the circle that would soon have to end, going from those past golden days to tomorrow's gray morning Dan had to stand, shaking his head wildly to vanquish the burning hurt from his eyes.

The refrigerator loomed before him again, and again he pulled it open for a beer. He wandered to the stereo, realized that that would definitely wake Karen. All he wanted to hear was "Cowgirl in the Sand," not in the song's entirety, but merely the opening melody, a short, quiet guitar movement that no one except Dan ever seemed to notice. It played so softly that only one person at a time could hear it, any group made noise enough to drown out the guitars that were so fleetingly beautiful and nearly noble sounding. Dan wanted to let the music bloom inside him tonight, but Karen lay asleep.

His coat was on a chair, and Dan pulled it along with him as he rushed toward the door. Stopping short, he checked his pockets for wallet and checkbook, finding everything in place. He ran quietly through the doorway and down the stairs, another door and he broke free into the cold blue night.

It amused him slightly to see that to anyone watching the street he, Dan, was the only alien object in the still life. Long measured steps took him to his car. With a savage movement Dan brought his fist down on the car hood and pivoted. He stared up at Karen's window. He gazed to her window and prayed for a light to flash on. There was no sign. His only answer rode the wings of a wind that blew towards the west.

Doug Emory

LIVING BLUES

The sun shone brightly on the chrome of the small, red Volkswagen as it sped down the highway like a small boat down a long, winding river. The highway soon turned into a bumpy country road, narrow and snake-like. The sun shone through the trees hitting the face of the young girl behind the wheel at intervals, casting shadows, long and sprawling over the small car as it bumped down the narrow road.

She stopped the car at a large red brick house and stepped out with a pile of books in one arm, the mail caught under her chin, and managed to carry her purse and keys in the other hand as she slammed the door shut with her left foot. She walked steadily up to the front door and unlocked it, only losing the "National Geographic" magazine, which slipped out from under her chin. She set her books down on the counter along with the mail, not thinking about what she was doing. She slipped her jacket off and hung it in the closet, picking the mail up as she passed the counter again to go up the stairs to the kitchen.

She leafed mechanicaly through the mail pulling out an envelope with the Junior College's return address on the top in bright blue letters. "Another letter from the Dean huh?" She thought to herself. "Good old Walter." She didn't open the letter, already knowing what it would say. She wondered which copy she had gotten. How many hundreds of letters went out, and she would never know which copy she had gotten.

She rummaged through the refrigerator looking for something to eat. She caught sight of something orange in the back, and reaching for it, knocked over a can of Hershey's chocolate syrup. "Damn!" she thought. "What a day!" The chocolate dripped down from the grate to the bottom of the refrigerator, making a small greasy looking pool behind the half defrosted package of hamburger which would somehow be transformed into dinner that night.

After she had cleaned up the syrup, she finally unpeeled her orange, and sitting in front of the television set, began to munch on the juicy segments. A drop of juice squirted into her eye, causing her to jump and rub her eye with her hand, which still had a smudge of chocolate across the back of one finger. By the time the sting had gone from her eye, she had tears and chocolate smeared under one corner of her eye and down the side of her cheek. She went on eating her orange for a few minutes before she finally realized that she had forgotten to turn the television on.

The picture came on in a bedroom. Two people, a man and a woman, were embracing, the man kissing her tenderly on the neck. The scene reminded her of many times before. Of things that had happened not on television, but in real life. Things that would probably never happen again, she thought. "Let's change this," she said, almost out loud with no one to hear but the old dog sleeping in the sunlight still spilling in through the window. The dog lifted its head as if to say, "I'm very sorry, but I must have dozed off. Would you mind repeating?" But then it let its head drop again to the floor and fell asleep.

Music was playing on the television and an airplane was flying over mountains, hills and beautifully green trees somewhere in Colorado. "That's where I'll go," she thought, gazing almost hypnotically at the screen. The trees swayed in a warm breeze, and a river sparkled below with the sun billowing out over the land like an epidemic of sunshine. "I've got to get out of this place," she thought, squirming on the couch. "I've got to get out of here!" This she said out loud to the dog, which had gotten up and ambled over to have its ears scratched. The dog noticed the chocolate on her cheek and licked her face enthusiastically. Suddenly the dog turned and ran for the back door where it had heard the screeching brakes of its master's car. The door opened and a woman of about forty years came in, setting a bag of groceries on the counter.

"Karen, come out and help with these groceries, and put that car in the garage. You know how I hate that stupid looking thing sitting out in front of the house!"

Karen mumbled something to herself and picked herself up off the couch to help her mother. She sluggishly made her way to the garage and picked a bag of groceries up off the floor to take to the kitchen. Mrs. Henderson came into the kitchen carrying the last bag of groceries and a carton of Coke, which she set down with a sigh, while she looked for some available space on the counter for the heavy bag in her arms. Mr. Henderson, tall, lean and tan, poked his head through the garage door, and yelled for Karen to be sure to move the car. Karen glanced out the window at the setting sun, and wondered when Spring would come.

After dinner, Karen sat down on the couch and picked a "Travel and Leisure magazine up off the table in front of her and began looking through the beautifully exciting pictures of Europe and Asia. Her father still sitting at the dinner table, turned to her and asked how she was doing in school. Karen always dreaded that question because she knew that one day she would have to tell her parents how bored she was with the whole routine.

"I'm doing alright, I guess," she said, as she shrugged her shoulders to give a physical display of bordom. "They will never catch on," she thought to herself.

"Think of the money you'll be making one of these days, honey." He still sat looking at the newspaper, only glancing up to see if Karen was paying attention to him.

"Yes, I know dad, but money isn't everything today. I mean, I want to be happy at my work. I want to enjoy myself. What sense is there in having a good job and being miserable?" These conversations always went this way, she thought.

"What do you mean being happy," he demanded. "You can have a good job and still be happy!" His voice was getting higher, and Karen could tell that this discussion would end the same way they all did.

"I know dad, but I'm not sure that I want to go into medicine. Schools around here just don't accept girls for the medical professions. I'm tired of working for something that I know I'll probably never get." By this time Karen was getting defensive and tried desperately to hold back the tears of frustration that were building up inside her eyes. By this time, Mrs. Henderson had picked up most of the conversation and she too had something to add.

"What ever you do, Karen, don't get married before you get some sort of degree. I've always regretted not going to college. If only I were your age again." After finishing this sentence, Mrs. Henderson went off into her own little dream world, which Karen had so often seen. She sat gazing at herself at nineteen, going into college to become a doctor or a nurse. Karen was sick of talking about school, and she hated herself for not being stronger, for not standing up for her beliefs.

The next morning was dark and raining. Karen dressed in the dark and slipped downstairs before anyone else was awake. The dog thumped its tail against the wall as Karen passed it on the stairs.

The air outside was thick and moist, filled with the cold drizzle which filled the sky. The sun was a dull red balloon hidden behind the sulking eyelids of the early morning mist. She pulled the car quietly out of the garage and started down the road toward the highway. The windshield wipers slapped a rhythm to a song which lingered in her mind from some old forgotten group, as she pressed down on the accelerator, hoping she wouldn't be late for her first class.

Diane Bruske

"LEAD ROOF"

I.

Morgan stood, holding the reins of his horse, facing the tumbling turbulence of the waterfall. He turned, reaching for a low branch, and looped the thin lengths of leather over it. The horse flicked an ear. Morgan moved to the shallow pool containing the frothy fall water and knelt, running his gloved hand along the edgewater mud, setting adrift shore-washed algae. His eyes sought a track. The mark of a wide-ranging, horse-killing puma. The foot-print would be large; massive. Morgan had followed the cat, slowly. The puma had moved steadily forward, concious of Morgan's pursuit, virtually unaware of his intent.

Morgan's eyes were drawn to a clump of crushed grass; the paw print lingered darkly, moistly betraying its maker. The puma had paused here, to drink the water. Morgan untied the horse, which walked forward, bending its mane-heavy neck, allowing its nose to graze the surface of the pool. It drank quietly, shifting its weight and swinging its coarse tail casually.

II.

They came out of the woods on to an open, windswept ridge. Ahead, in the carved valley, lay the church. sparse ground cover. And there, frantically following the deeply rutted pathway of the road, moved the minister. Away from the church.

The massive doors swayed. Swirls of dust spun stealthly inwards; the doors remained helpless to stop them. Morgan edged his horse forward, down the decline. The cougar's tracks lay there, flagrantly flaunting their

widely-spaced deceptive qualities. But Morgan's dependence on the dust-molded paw prints diminished with his realization of the cause for the reverand's retreat, for as he moved closer, Morgan saw the cat. It had perched upon the high back of a wooden pew. Morgan's horse stomped the earth with one hoof. Uneasily.

The puma's eyes, already adjusted to the dimness inside, fixed Morgan in their focus; glowing amber. And Morgan threw one leg over the saddle then slid to the ground, and stood, alone, outside the church. He reached inside a leather pouch and closed his hand upon what he sought. The matches. The cougar remained, as it were, unaware of the conflagration waiting it.

III.

Great flames blazed upwards, consuming the framework of the stained glass windows. Morgan stood back from the fire; its blinding heat clawed at his face and eyes. He grasped the reins of his horse tightly, leading it back up the ridge. The groaning of the church, as its beams became gutted, grew unbearibly loud. The screech of the sizzling walls attacked Morgan's ears. He walked on, his back to the burning. His horse, unable to understand rivaled the noise with terrified, gulping intakes of air. Clouds and masses of smoke colored the sky. And Morgan did not turn to look.

Further, beyond the church, lay the tracks of the puma. And within the fringe of the forest crouched the puma itself, upon the lower limb of an unbent oak. The odor of recent smoke clung to its fur; its stark mask of confusion was slowly being replaced by cougar complacency. And the black tip of its burnt autumn tail curled slowly, twitching soundlessly, to form inverted question-marks in the afternoon air.

Etha Griffin

THE PIRANHA PECCADILLO

"You are invited to a soiree at the
residence of
Lady Salcia Rapine-Frenzie
on the evening of March twenty-third.
Strictly formal.
RSVP"

Lascivia gazed at the little white card. Sibilant and she had been decidely married for two years and Salacia still had the nerve to send him an invitation to one of her soirees - and Lascivia very pointedly was <u>not</u> included. With icy deliberation she mutilated the card and fed it to her piranha. This was one invitation Sibilant would not even see, eliminating the need to hurl invectives and champagne bottles at him.

"Nuts to you, Madame," she simpered, imitating Salacia's prim upper crust lewdness.

The butler poked his lumpy green head through the door. "Miss Tupperware is here, madame."

"Well, don't just stand there like a toad, send her in." Really, that butler would have to go, he just didn't fit. That bright green against the muted colors of the house. A nice lavender would be much more satisfactory.

Sappy Tupperware appeared, lugging his sewing box.

"Well, let's see what you've come up with this time," sighed Luscivia, trying to sound bored.

"Nut'in much. Here's a liddle number in puke--"

"Puce," interjected Lascivia painedly. "And I detest puce as you know very well."

"Oh, yeah. How 'bout pigskin? I got a real bargain on pigskin now dat de football season's over. Make a nice liddle suit." She pulled out a paper bag and made a sketch with a piece of chalk. "Like dis. Real chick."

"Chic. That'll be fine. Now get out of here; I can't stand you a minute longer. When was the last time you bathed?"

Sappy shrugged and muttered something about fussy schnozzes as she shuffled out. The be-warted green butler wrinkled his nose in dismay as Sappy passed between him and the open door.

Lascivia slammed the study door and pulled out a box of note paper. She wrote in her sublimely elegant hand:

"Oh, darlings, I just got the most terrific urge to see you all. I do hope you can see your way clear to being here on the 22nd. Just our closest friends. What do you say? Million kisses,
- Lascivia Catamount

She sent out variations of the note - the personal touch was Lascivia's speciality - to all the people who could be expected to be at Salacia's on the twenty-third. She'd fix that little bitch's wagon but good.

The next week was a delicious bother of details. She had to select the pate, the cavier, the rye-krisp. The furniture had to be rearranged, the wine cellar re-stocked. She even had the cannabis plant moved from the study into a cornor of the drawing room. By the appointed night all was perfection.

Lascivia struck a pose by the fireplace, prepared to greet her "dearest friends." At the last minute she remembered Sibilant and tore through the house until she found him snoring beneath a potted palm in the back hall.

"Wake up, you idiot!" She screamed lovingly. "The guests will be here any minute and here you are snorting like a drowned hippopotomus. You wanna spoil the whole evening, schmuck?" She pulled him to his feet and gave him a wifely swat on his bald spot. "Get your ass out there!"

Sibilant shuffled reluctantly into the drawing room and flopped into a chair. Lascivia surveyed him critically and sighed. Maybe she should have let Salacia have him; it'd serve her right.

"Sir Halfa Magnum and Lady Applecheek, "intoned the brand new, pale mauve butler.

Lascivia's frown turned into a dazzling smile as she moved foreward to greet her guests. Applecheek had put on some weight, tsk tsk, and Halfa already smelt of whiskey. "So good to see you, she murmered graciously.

"The Earl and Countess of Muckrake."

"Lascivia, dahling..."

"The Right Honerable Ludicrous Patsey Patsey."

"The Misses Sabient and Pernicia Harloting."

"His Lordship Cornball Laughable, and Lady..."

And so on. Everybody had come. Lascivia's dazzling smile became a triumphant grin. Triumph. Her darling Reprobate boys were already disecting the potted pot and Horrifera Tangent was torturing the piranha with a hard-boiled egg. Ecstasy. Patsey was showing his pocket collection of pornographic ticket stubs to Pernicia Harloting whose prim mouth showed traces of moisture at the corners. Perfect, absolutely perfect. Halfa Magnum balanced a brandy snifter on his head and began to demonstrate the mating dance of the Uga Chega Tribe of Upper Dementia....

Lascivia awoke late the next afternoon with a splitting headache. She pushed Lord Cornball's feet out her face and climbed over his body as gracefully as possible. Then she had to grasp her head tightly to keep it from falling off. She made her way across the room, staggering between and over the various bodies -- and under Stagnant Reprobate who was draped over the chandelier -- and finally reached the mantle. She peered at the clock from beneath a semi-detached eyelash. Five o'clock.

Five o'clock!

Lascivia chortled delightedly, and then moaned in agony as her frontal regions filed for divorce from her temporal regions. She decided on the Mona Lisa smirk instead and groped for the bell rope. The new mauve butler appeared, banging his pointed head on Lady Applecheek's wooden leg, which was hanging from Maladroit Reprobate's hand which, along with Maladroit Reprobate, was hanging from the top of the highboy.

"Breakfast, Ratchet," announced Lascivia elegantly. "Bring me whole bunches of schmairie poysters. An' coffee. D'you see my husband anywhere'

"The master left the house an hour ago, madame."

"Huh?"

"He mentioned an engagement at Lady Rapine-Frenzie's, madame."

Lascivia stared at the butler's hairless peak without seeing it. "He...went...to... Salacia's...?"

Lascivia let out an ear splitting shriek. She pounced on Lady Applecheek's motionless form, shaking that august personage like a sack of potatoes.

"DidyougetaninvitationtoSalacia Rapine's?"

"Umm?" murmered Applecheek wittily.

"Salacia! Rapine-Frenzie! Party!"

"Oh no, dear. Is she having one? 'Fraid I'll have to beg off on that one, what with..." She went back to sleep.

"Shut up," growled Lascivia, somewhat redundantly. She darted across the room and grabbed the Earl. "Did you get invited to Salacia's party?" She knocked Salient Harloting off the piano. "did you know about Salacia's party?" Both replies were in the negative. Neither the Reprobates nor the Cornballs, neither Patsey nor Horrifera Tangent had gotton invitations. Nobody had. Nobody.

Lascivia collapsed in the middle of the floor. All that work, a whole night and half a day wasted with people she didn't even like, and all for nothing. Salacia Rapine-Frenzie was having a party, all right. For two people. And one of them was Sibilant. Lascivia let out a mournful avail that knocked Stagnant Reprobate right off the chandelier.

"Does Madame require anything else?" inquired Ratchet politely.

Lascivia screamed again and hurled the cannabis plant at the pointed mauve head. Ratchet backed quickly out the door, managing to avoid the projectile. Lascivia remained in the middle of the room tragically beating her head against the floor until she finally knocked herself unconscious.

Louise Converse

THE TWILIGHT WORLD

TO: Sector F7 Supervisor Mis
FROM: Sol 3 (Terra) Perfect Careton
SUBJECT: Terran society/Interim Report

The people of Terra, known as Earth to its inhabitants, have developed a unique society due to a series of wars culminating in the last Cranic War during which approximately one third of the planet's land mass was rendered unfit for human habitation due to radioactive fallout. In the generation that has grown up since the last war, radical changes have been wrought in social/political/economic structures of the planet. While past experiences are of no value in such a situation, it has not proved as difficult to administer a government as one would be led to believe. The general feeling left by the recent warfare is one of gentle anarchy, and an almost religious respect for pacifism. They tolerate our attempts to govern them largely because they are too exhausted to protest....

*

Jame Careton was a damn good administrator and a born diplomat. Never had a total failure. Who better to put in charge of a planet where everything was upside-down and front-to-back? It had taken him two years, but he was finally to the point where he thought he could understand these people. The problem, actually, was to explain Terrans to Galactians. "Noble savages," he murmured, and immediately wondered where he had picked that up. No matter; it was an apt description.

The best way would probably be to record his own impressions of the Terrans, as collected over the past two years. Would a die-hard bureaucrat like Mis ever believe that Jame Careton had been taken in by a song and dance--literally by a song and dance? It wasn't likely, but it was worth a try.

"Upon my arrival on Terra, or Earth, I was given lodgings with one Jethro Woodham until such time as my official residence could be completed, a period of approximately six months. Woodham is the closest thing to what would be considered a leading citizen of Earth, and his house is a gathering point for the diverse elements of Terran society..."

*

Jethro Woodham was an enormous Santa Claus of a man with a bushy beard turning from gray to white. But his eyes belied the laughter; they had seen more tears than joy in sixty years, and now, even when he laughed the sorrow lingered in his eyes. He was beaming now, for he had a full belly, a brimming mug of beer, and a dining room full of people. His plump wife leaned over and murmured something in his ear, and Jethro's smile grew even broader.

"Then he'll sing for his supper!" he roared, drowning out the noise in the room. "Been a long time since we had any good music 'round here." He turned to his house guest. "She says one of the kids that came in tonight sings a little. A little, by God! When one of those kids starts in on a song it's just perfectly beautiful, that it is. You'll like this, Jame. Well, where is he, eh?"

There was a stir in one corner of the room, and a girl stood up. She grabbed a chair in one hand and clutched a guitar in the other. She wore the functional overalls that were standard Terran dress, but hers were more worn than most. A halo of straight red hair framed her thin face, which was almost filled by her huge green eyes. She looked little more than a child, sixteen at the most, but ages could be deceptive here. Careton decided he already knew her history; it would be just like the thousands of others he had seen in his files. A war baby.

Then she started to sing.

Careton had never heard anything like it, used as he was to the plastic beat songs of the Galaxy. She sang with a voice at once ancient and vibrant with life. Songs that were older than anything he knew, yet as real and living as the people who listened raptly: old Jethro, who had lost five children in the War, the homeless young orphans, the couples holding hands in the corners. She sang of a city called New Orleans, a woman named Barbra Allen, a soldier, a farmer, the tragedy of war, the elusive peace. And for an hour, time had stopped.

*

Careton turned off the transcriber and studied what he had written thus far. The incident at Woodham's had happened three months after his arrival. It had taken him another two years to comprehend what he had seen and heard there. How could he convey in dry departmental terms the sort of people who lived on the edge of radio-active graveyards with names like New York, Moscow, Washington, London, Peking? People who were no longer afraid enough to be violent. People who could no longer hate. Yet they were not burnt-out shells of human beings; they were deeper than anyone he had ever known. He had said they were too tired to fight, yet he knew somehow that if pushed hard enough they would explode with more heat than a nuclear warhead.

He remembered the red-haired singer again. He had seen her at another impromptu concert some time after the evening at Jethro's. He had gotten a chance to speak to her this time. Her name was Marina - just that, nothing else. Perhaps she would be a good way to explain these people; God knew there were enough like her on Earth.

*

They were in a hole that had once been somebody's basement. It was dark as death itself, punctuated by the flashes and roars of the explosions above. The other people had long since become quiet, and Marina knew they were dead. She buried her face in her mother's stomach, trying to shut out the shadows. Mama was whispering frantically, meaningless things. Talking about the sea, how she loved the sea, and weren't sea gulls the noisiest birds, and how sometimes you could see mermaids in the surf - and Marina had no idea what a seagull or a mermaid was, and she had never seen the sea. What she knew was that Mama's le were pinned beneath a hundred kilos of steel beam and her head was bleeding. And finally Mama was quiet like the others and Marina knew why.

Then had followed a confusion of streets that were dark even at midday. Rumaging through the ruins in search of scraps of food, rags of clothing. Hiding from the Cranian and Galactian patrols. Cold, hungry, desperately frightened - memories of bestiality that she learned to force from consciousness. Eventually the madness wore itself out and people awoke to find their world charred and bleeding from nearly a generation of continuous warfare.

Marina, an old woman of eight, spent most of her time climbing through the ruins searching for things that might prove useful. There was no real need for these expeditions; the Galactic Federation had begun relief to the survivors, so she was living quite

well, comparatively. She wandered partly out of habit and partly out of restlessness - there was simply little else to do.

It was instinct born out of years of hiding that made her freeze when she heard the soft patter in the ruins of an old bunker. Her eyes followed the sound to discover a small bird perched on the barbed wire a few feet away. The bird eyed her curiously, and decided that the skinny child with the dirty face presented no danger. He tilted back his head and began to sing. Marina listened in rapt awe; she had never heard a sound like this before. It filled every fiber of her young body with the sheer joy of being alive. But the bird soon grew tired and flew away, leaving the girl weeping for the first time since her mother's death.

Later someone told her that the bird was call d a robin. There had once been a lot of them, but they kept out of the way since the war. Maybe they were making a comeback.

*

They found the old man wandering around in the snow lugging an o dd-shaped suitcase. They thawed him out by the fire and he recovered a bit. Marina crouched by the fire and stared at him curiously.

"What's in the funny box?" she demanded, pointing.

"Um? Oh, that." The old man rubbed his chin and gazed at the case as if seeing it for the first time. "That there's a guitar, child. It's kind of like a soul that ya c'n see. Never seed one, eh?" She shook her head. "Wall, give it t'here, then, an' I'll show ya how it work."

He took the case on his lap and lifted out a stange looking instrument with six strings stretched between the end of a long neck and the bottom of a wide body. His hands caressed the wood and the strings as he started to play, and Marina suddenly remembered the robin singing on the wire. Nothing else could even compare to the beauty of the sounds that came from the old man's guitar.

After a few minutes he stopped, feeling the arthritic twinges shoot through his fingers. He studied the wide-eyed child in front of him.

"Um- C'mere, child. Time ya larned, time ya larned."

The old man died a month later, but before he did he managed to teach Marina enough about his art to whet her taste for music, for beauty. After his death she left the others on a quest that would take the rest of her life - a quest for songs to sing and to live. Her journeys would take her over much of what was left of Earth and ultimately to Jethro's house, where Careton would hear her sing.

*

Careton paused. Now for the zinger.

"Marina's story may seen an odd choice for this report, but her story is not significantly different from the stories of half a million other people on this planet. The survivors of the last war have been forced to re-evaluate old values and create new ones. One of the ideals that has vanished is the infallibility of the Galaxy; in fact, the Federation is blamed for the last war, and therefore for the destruction of Earth.".

(This was how you told a man as dutiful and book-bound as Mis that the birthplace of the Galactic Federation wanted out.)

"I would strongly recommend an absolute minimum of interference in Terran affairs." He tacked on some sort of official ending for propriety's sake and decided it would have to do. Mis would think he was cracking under the strain. It was, after all, totally unprecedented for a top diplomat in reasonably sound health to request the recall of an entire mission three years before the tour was up.

He thought of Jethro again. Jethro's death a few months before hadn't been an unusual one by Earth's standards. Slow radiation poisoning. Death carried on the Terran wind from the still burning ashes of what had been the glory of the Galaxy. Every human being on Earth was dying at his own rate, Marina too. The task force that had accompanied Careton had been spared only because they were newcomers to Earth and had not absorbed enough of the poison to be fatal. But they would have to leave soon with only two years of a five year mission accomplished. Mis the accountant would object to that. Mis could go to hell.

Careton remembered one of Marina's songs, then. Something about an answer that was to be found in the wind. It had been meant as a song of social protest, but now it was an ironic footnote to the burning of mankind's cradle. Even in the face of an inescapable doom men continued to proclaim that brand of idealism that made the human race unique.

"Like a candle in the wind," he thought. Now where had he got that little gem?

Louise Converse

WATERSHED OF THE RIVER STYX

The sun beamed down like a benevolent god, and John worshipped it for illuminating the day's crisp beauty. A luke warm wind blew furrows into the muddy water, sending endless matching wavelets slapping against the sides of the small aluminum boat. With a gentle movement John shifted the tiller, aiming toward a narrow straight between two distant points of land. He knew he had rested long enough in the shallows that bordered the shore.

Contentedly, John watched his collie pup companion clamber throughout the boat. John 's eyes followed the dog as it raced from bow to stern and back again. Turning away, John looked back at the wake that billowed behind like a blown glass cloud. He switched his gaze to the larger scene. The surrounding hills were a rich green carpet and the sky was dotted with tall white clouds that sailed like clipper ships against the deep blue. John relaxed, immersing himself deeply into the perfect morning.

There had been a day once before that was as complete as this one was becoming. On either his third or fourth birthday, John and his friend Janie Kuhn had toddled into their magic spot in the center of a cluster of evergreens. They had brought with them his grandmother's gift of a box of chocolate lollipops, and had passed the day pretending the candy grew on trees. Somehow it had all come true. The candy had hung pure and sweet on the evergreens, and that afternoon became a fairytale image that haunted John always.

For reasons unknown, nothing good had ever come from that waking dream. John remembered the thick black belt that had been cruelly used against him for being a "greedy little pig." All because he had enjoyed eating what was meant only to be eaten. One night several weeks later he had found his grandmother collapsed on the floor, paper white skin marred by the dark blood that spurted constantly from her mouth. That first touch of death had hurt him like hail flung by a strong, cold north wind. John began playing with the engine controls, letting his mind clear.

The boat plowed through the straight and entered another large pond that was nearly twin to the one it had left. This was how this man-made mutant cross between a river and a lake ran, a string of large basins connected by river-like narrows. This body of water resembled nothing so much as an amoeba sprawled among the rolling hills. Guiding the boat carefully along the coast, John headed for a cliff formation just to his south.

The pup stood at the bow like a comic figurehead as John slowly cut the engine. He steered the craft as best he could between snags and nearly hidden rocks. The boat hit the dark mud bottom with a hollow smack. John leapt out instantly, pulling the boat farther onto the bank with him. He began securing the rowboat to the trunk of a sturdy tree.

As John fought with the nylon rope, his dog ran on into the forest. It vanished from sight almost instantly. John did not follow the collie. He instead picked his way among the moldy rock until he had reached the step stone cliff face. He tight roped along a thin natural railing, stopping just above the entrance to the small cave he had spotted from a distance. Carefully and slowly, John lowered his body until his feet touched the damp cave floor.

Nothing dwelled in the cavern but disappointment. Try as he might John could not see anything romantic in it. There were no signs of pirates, hidden treasures, or winding corridors. John had conquered an insignificant pock mark on the geologic time record, littered with beer cans and trash. The spiders leered evilly out at him.

He heard a familiar high-pitched bark accented by a deep alien growl. John felt a sharp chill. He turned, half slipping on the slimy stone, then darted quickly along the cliff. On a small rise near the boat he saw a

large gray ghost pounce on and destroy the collie pup that he had strayed from.

John pulled two round heavy stones from the muck and stared up at the wolf. He wondered if the hate in his eyes matched that which burned insanely in the animal's. Never let a beast know you're frightened, he remembered. John brought the stones together hard, and the crack echoed back to him.

"Run animal and leave your kill." John's mind fought through mad hatred only in brief shooting star flashes. "Leave your kill and go." He took a step forward. "Run beast ... I said run!" John pushed sweat and hair from his eyes with his forearm. "I understand now, they call it greed. You need me as well."

A heat wave wall had sprung between the man and the wolf and through it John could see only a distorted gray form and clear, searing yellow eyes. All he could hear was a hellish, "Yes."

The beast hit John like a huge steel weight. Keeping one arm up to shield his throat, with the other John pounded a stone into something which gave and crumbled. The wolf backed off, limping, but did not bolt. John rushed after the animal, which uncoiled against him. On his back and stunned, John slid fast into shallow water. The wolf was on him with paralyzing fury.

John sank one stone deep into the calm gray space between the wolf's eyes.

There was an uneasy moment before John realized that peace reigned. Wearily he threw the limp corpse from him and crawled to a kneeling position. Bending there by the waters edge, he was hit by a sudden, pagan wave of exhileration. The bloodthirsty thrill of triumph. John was urged to bathe his hands in enemy blood, and loose a long scream of joy. Still, he understood his victory was not complete. He stared up the rise toward the body of his former companion.

Though he was weak from combat, John untied the boat and shoved off. He rested, watching the waves slide by, tightening his jacket against a wind that was growing unkindly cold. He tried relaxing and tried to think of anything but the collie pup. He steered the boat out through another straight.

Sure, I have many good things to remember, John thought. He remembered his affair with Mary and reopened that old wound. She had been so fine for him in every way, until leaving him behind as a too-low rung on the social ladder. At times it seemed as though she was the only one who had ever touched him deeply. John could not remember what it was about her that had sent his emotions soaring. It was ironic that the only memories he still held onto were sexual. He tore his mind away from Mary, back to the pup he had loved mainly for its foolish, comic innocence.

The country rolled by, growing plainer as the sun set. The wind, now frigid and strong, was giving John thoughts of reversing his journey. He never stopped to search for treasure anymore. For the most part he stared dumbly out across the murky lake and tried not to think of anything.

Another turn set the boat running due west. The dull red sun hung before John like a horror lurking at the edge of the world. Surprised, he noticed a bridge which spanned the lake up ahead. John lowered his gaze again and saw the bridge's shadow, which was a menacing black wall lying barely submerged. As the aluminum prow cut the dark band, John again gazed upward. On the bridge stood one lone man and he jumped, falling through the sun into the sun. He fell slowly in front of the low scarlet sun and burst its sparkling mirrored image like a bomb. The purring engine that drove the rowboat died.

John couldn't believe how suddenly the storm struck. The sky was instantly cloaked with battleship clouds which erased everything from horizon to horizon. John fumbled futilely with the engine as the rain began plummeting. There was no co-operation from the lifeless metal toy. John looked desperately around for a savior. He saw instead his execution-the waves and wind were hurtling him against a huge cliff face. He had already been pushed too close. John scrambled to the oars and rowed powerfully out to a distance he judged safe. The wind hissed in protest. John could not mend the engine before he was thrust back into the shadow of the tall stone. He rowed out once more, through his arms were feeling the strain. The motor refused to start.

John could not remember how many times he had fought off the stone's clawing grasp. That did not matter now, for he had failed. His arms dangled uselessly at his sides like limp sand. He would have to face the dark water's fury. John gripped the aluminum gunwales tightly and watched the cliff loom up, always more steeply. He dived for the oars, but that last try was not to be. The boat hit the cliff and began climbing it, crushed between a wall of water and one of stone. It capsized with a savage movement.

The storm passed as quickly as it had hit. The thunderheads slashed away across the low hills to search for new prey. The aluminum boat floated peacefully on the calm water. A small silver splinter in a blue-black pool, the boat turned one circle before slowly retracing the long path home.

Doug Emory

...and so they were streakers

Once upon a time, on the western campus of the U. of J., many students were inspired by their inferior being. And it came to pass, in the city of Maurie, the unique idea to proclaim and expose the mysteries of procreation.

At first they were met with total apathy. Organized into a group called "the Speakers" they would give long and boaring lectures. It was evident they were not reaching their public. And so their leader decided that his group needed a boost or gimmick to attract potential members.

After many hours of meditation, he came up with the idea to run past the speaker dressed in a bright orange and black suit. This would serve to gain attention and following him would be another member passing out recruiting forms.

This idea worked the first few times but later it lost its shock value and membership again dropped. Bewildered the Speakers still sought of an effective way to reach the people. After months of failure the group died and lone straggling members were shunned by the people.

However these few did not give up. They would give their antagonizing lectures until the group would no longer tolerate them. Then, by popular demand, they would flee. Now aware of their audiences' hostile feelings, the Speakers decided to run through a crowd and throw pamphlets to their followers. Because of their new mobility the Speakers decided to change their name to "the Streakers."

This streaking movement was a success until one day when one of its members was tripped while running through a group of hostile people. The results made the Streakers what they are today. The crowd, enraged by his very presence, proceeded to strip the streaker down to his birthday suit. After he was completely disrobed the streaker got up and continued on his run as if nothing had happened.

However something had happened. Strangely enough, through the rest of his run, the streaker was noticed and people listened, or seemed to listen. The next day students from miles around wanted to join this now popular organization. Crowds would form in anticipation of a Streaker. They couldn't wait to see them.

After the Streakers had exposed their point of view, they retreated into the masses and lived happily ever after.

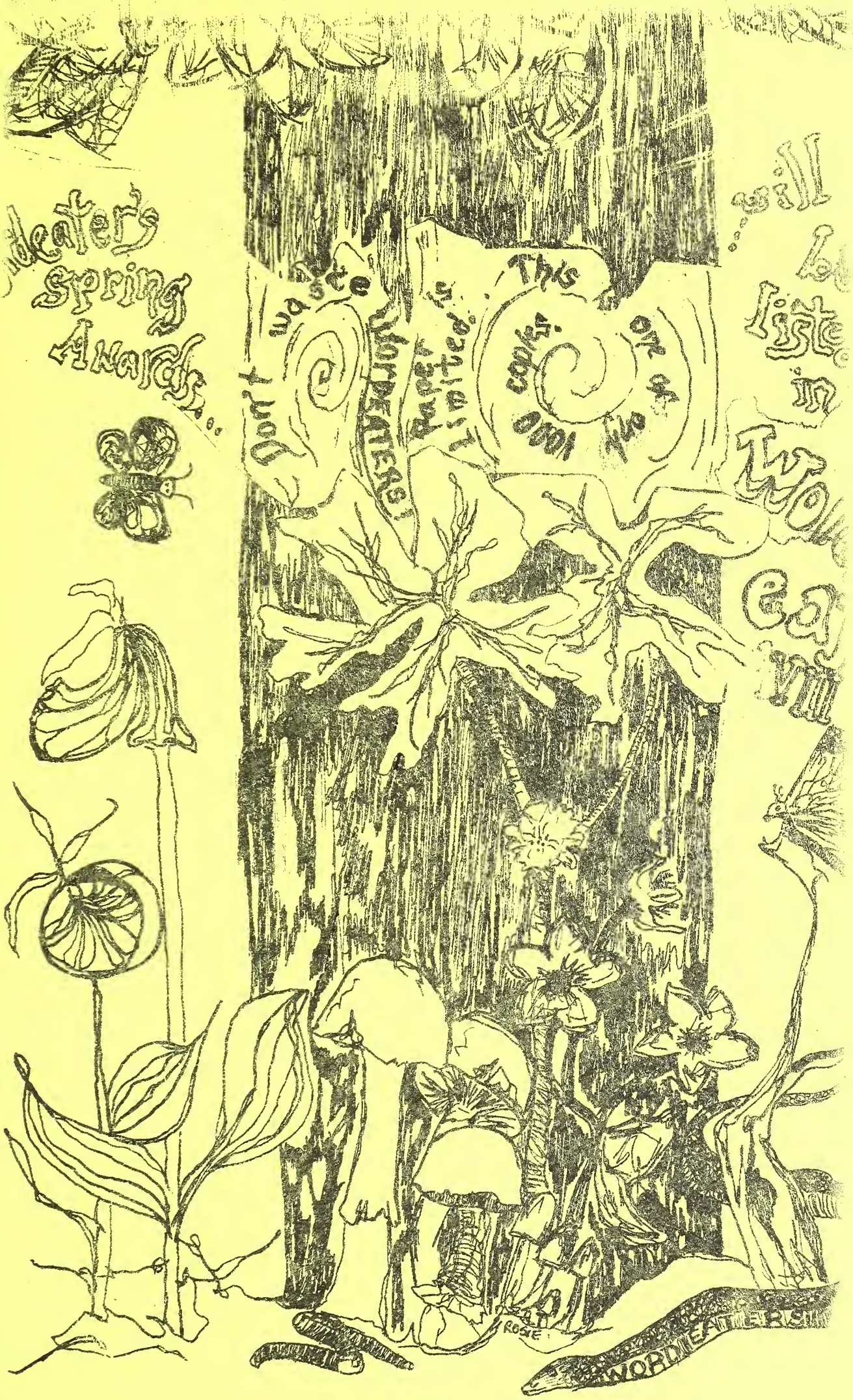
The moral: "Speaker today; Streaker tomorrow - progress."

Arlene Delrose

WORDEATER 7 STAFF

Gluttons.....Etha Griffin
Jean Tyrell
John Stobart
(faculty)
Poetasters .....Cookie Haas
Mike Peterson -
whose dramatic parody "The Excessist" won immense guffaws from the staff but was deemed, after soul searching, obscene by "community standards."

Chief Cook & Bottle-Washer.....
Wesley Kropp


Don't waste WORDEATERS!
This is a copy of the WORD EATER!
Will be listed in Wor
Ca
Wor
Spring Awards..
ROSIE
WORDEATERISM

Wordgazer 7